F 101 103 double meaning is no less evident in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, especially on p. 161 of the French translation. The same double usage is evident in oral traditions.

Thus it is understandable that the word Mandé has come to be considered as an equivalent of our words "empire" and "kingdom" when they are used in a geographical sense, and that, as a result, the term has varied in application because it depended on an ever-changing territorial domain subject to the domination of successive ma.

M F 103 642 However, it is not only from the geographical point of view that the term Mandé has remained indefinite or vaguely defined; the same uncertainty prevails on the political level. In a general way, Mandé is considered to be exclusively the empire of the Mandingue people, who are one of the subdivisions of the group called Mandé by the Europeans (1). In order to

> 1. Mandé, as the name for a group of peoples or of native languages, is unknown to the Sudanese; in this sense it is used exclusively by the Europeans.

understand the meaning attached to the word "empire" in western Sudan, it is essential to place oneself on the native level and not on that of our European civilization from which the term is borrowed.

F B 103 642 [614] Briefly, the Sudanese empire is a system of clans. It is formed by bringing together of elements taken over from clans that have either disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. It acquires power and extension through the influence of the founder or, less frequently, of one of his successors, and then falls into decline at the hands of enemies or as a result of schisms which arise at the death of the ruler on whose success and "flair" its fortunes have depended.

It is this constantly repeated process of grouping, separation and regrouping which dominates the entire [15] history of the Sudanese empires and dynasties and which makes any study of the people so very difficult. The geographical nomenclature is,

F B 101 103

608 [59] No one may oppose the Fama's will, except his sénanku
643 who has the power to stay the chief's decisions, particularly in case of acts dictated by anger: murders, wars, etc.

The Fama's resources came from the work of his familiars,
643 from a levy on wild foodstuffs, half of the war booty, all otherwise
651 unowned goods, from certain precious substances, such as gold and
652 ivory, from taking part of every animal killed in the hunt and the skins of all wild animals brought down, all receipts for the right to hold markets, for grazing, and for changing pastures, tolls for river crossings, fines, and from the sale of prisoners of the law. On the other hand, he had to meet the following expenses: to feed and clothe the members of the community in the case of need;to maintain the warriors (give them a groom, a wife, a rifle, a horse); bestow favors on people of caste, feed them, clothe them, arrange for their marriages if need be; make offerings to charity; receive strangers; feed prisoners detained for judgment or otherwise held.

643 The Fama ordered all work of common interest: construction
653 and maintenance of fortifications, clearing trails, preservation of springs, construction and upkeep of the mosque if one was needed, making pirogues for common use, setting up rest platforms.

These works were carried out through payments in labor. The work was divided up among the villages by the Fama, and the village chiefs in turn assigned it to family heads. He who did not carry it out in person could have it done by members of his family; he who refused could be obliged to comply by force.

642 Bambara society rarely achieved a systematic and centralized form of organization analogous to our European kingdoms. What has been dignified with the name of "empire" was scarcely more than an organization which reflected the attraction exercised by a family, by reason of its prestige or its power, on groupings which accepted its suzerainty. As Monteil has shown very well, a family's effort at domination has always been directed at groupings of people and not at territorial expansion.

642 The whole of these groupings constitutes the Ton. This in-
565 cludes:

1. a chief, the ton-tigi;
2. the local chiefs, fa;

642
565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be
727 killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
554 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sënanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[551] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Sëgou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Sëgou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.